

The Man Who Was All Shadow

The man who was all shadow
could only be seen when the sun shone
for half the year he was completely invisible
passers-by felt the ghost of his skin
imagined a whisper
sometimes in the solitary heart of a winter's day
he'd leap out from his lacuna and hurl
himself weightless body and soul
against them
craving a touch
a moment's hesitation
but of course they kept right on walking
oblivious, distracted,
by anything no matter
how inconsequential
still more substantial
than the all-shadow man.

When the first heat of the Spring
burned over the blossoms
the man who was
all shadow
danced wildly with his back to the sun
watching his arms and legs flailing
on silent stone
in a dark hymn

of poignant joy;
There's an interesting phenomenon
someone would remark
it must be the drink
or a trick of the light
for a shadow to be dancing
where there is no man

and he thought he might live forever
this man who cast his shadow shape
like a lure on teeming water
live forever
devoid of body brimming with nerves and bone

but one night a woman with the senses of a ghost
plucked him from the womb of the dark
felt him as solid as adamant
with her weird occult fingertips

and for a moment the shadow man stepped
into a body of light
assumed a transitory form
felt the blood hurl through him toward the sun
headlong into the conflagration of the world he ran
screaming:

My shadow is burning

My shadow is burning

While the sun scorched the brand of the world on his skin

and he danced, alive at last,

leaving

no

mark.